

Listing of and Amendments to the Claims

This listing of, and amendment to, the claims will replace all previous versions of the claims:

1. (previously presented) Apparatus adapted to communicate via a network, comprising:

a firewall including a set of rules for identifying packets associated with inappropriate activity, the rules in the set being separated into a plurality of classes; and
an indicator device for providing a plurality of user discernable indicators, wherein each of the plurality of user discernable indicators is associated with a different one of the plurality of classes, and wherein a respective one of said plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered if one or more of the rules corresponding to one of said plurality of classes associated with the respective one of said plurality of user discernable indicators is violated,

wherein the rules in the set are prioritized such that each of the plurality of classes represents a respective different one of a plurality of priority levels.

2-5. (cancelled)

6. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the plurality of user discernable indicators comprises a highlighted icon displayed on a computing device.

7. (previously presented) A method, comprising:
defining a set of rules to detect inappropriate communication activity on a computer or network;
separating the rules in the set into a plurality of classes;
associating each of the plurality of classes with a different one of a plurality of user discernable indicators;

examining data traffic to determine whether at least one of the rules has been violated; and

in the case that at least one of the rules of a first one of said plurality of classes has been violated, filtering said data traffic violating the at least one of the rules of the first one of said plurality of classes, providing a user discernable notification of said violation by triggering a respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators associated with the first one of said plurality of classes, and wherein the rules in the set are prioritized such that each of the plurality of classes represents a respective different one of a plurality of priority levels.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

determining if a first threshold level of rule violation has been exceeded prior to filtering said data traffic.

9. (original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

determining if a first threshold level of rule violation has been exceeded prior to triggering the user discernable indicator.

10-15. (cancelled)

16. (previously presented) A cable modem, comprising:

downstream processing circuitry;

upstream processing circuitry;

a controller in communication with said downstream circuits, upstream circuitry, and a memory;

a firewall program including a set of rules for identifying packets associated with inappropriate activity, the rules being separated into a plurality of classes, said firewall program being resident in said memory and executable by said controller to cause examining data of packets from said downstream and upstream circuitry; and

a plurality of user discernable indicators, wherein each of the plurality of user discernable indicators is associated with a different one of the plurality of classes and wherein a respective one of said plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered if one or more of the rules corresponding to one of said plurality of classes associated with the respective one of said plurality of user discernable indicators is violated, and wherein the rules in the set are prioritized such that each of the plurality of classes represents a respective different one of a plurality of priority levels.

17. (cancelled)

18. (previously presented) The cable modem of claim 16, wherein said plurality of user discernable indicators comprises a first LED for signifying a filtering event and a second LED for signifying filtering data packets deemed pernicious in said set of rules.

19. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said plurality of user discernable indicators comprises a highlighted icon displayed on a computer device.

20. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the firewall filters any of the packets that violate the one or more rules irrespective of a number of the packets that violate the one or more rules, but only triggers the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators when the number of the packets that violate the one or more rules exceeds a pre-specified threshold.

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the data traffic includes a number of packets that violate the at least one of the rules of the first one of the plurality of classes, and wherein the method filters the packets that violate the at least one of the rules of the first one of the plurality of classes, irrespective of the number of packets that violate the one or more rules, but only triggers the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators when the number of packets that violate the at

least one of the rules of the first one of the plurality of classes exceeds a pre-specified threshold.

22. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the firewall program is executable by said controller to cause filtering of any of the packets that violate the one or more rules irrespective of a number of the packets that violate the one or more rules, but wherein the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered only when the number of packets that violate the one or more rules exceeds a pre-specified threshold.

23. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of user discernable indicators except a particular one is associated with the respective different one of the plurality of classes, the particular one of the plurality of user discernable indicators being associated with an affirmative status that filtering is being contemporaneously performed for any of the packets that violate the one or more rules, and wherein the method further comprises filtering any of the packets that violate the one or more rules, and wherein the particular one of the plurality of user discernable indicators is concurrently triggered, along with the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators, to indicate that the filtering is being contemporaneously performed, only when a number of the packets that violate the one or more rules exceeds a pre-specified threshold.

24. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein only the particular one of the plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered if the one or more of the rules is violated, the filtering is performed by the firewall program, and the number of the packets that violate the one or more rules does not exceed the pre-specified threshold.

25. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein only the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered if the one or more of the rules is violated, the filtering is performed by the firewall program, and the

number of the packets that violate the one or more rules does not exceed the pre-specified threshold.

26. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein whether the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered or not is based on which of the plurality of priority levels is involved with respect to a corresponding rule violation.

27. (currently amended) The method of claim 7, wherein each of the plurality of user discernable indicators except a particular one is associated with the different one of the plurality of classes, and the method further comprises:

associating the particular one of the plurality of user discernable indicators with an affirmative status that filtering is being contemporaneously performed for any of the packets that violate at least one of the rules; and

in the case of the rule of at least ~~the~~ a first class from among the plurality of classes being violated and a number of packets violating the rule of at least the first class exceeding a pre-specified threshold, providing a user discernable notification of the filtering being contemporaneously performed by triggering, concurrently with the triggering of the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators, the particular one of the plurality of user discernable indicators associated with the affirmative status that the filtering is being contemporaneously performed.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein in the case of the rule of at least the first class being violated and the number of packets violating the rule of at least the first class not exceeding the pre-specified threshold, only providing the user discernable notification of the filtering without providing the user discernable notification of the violation.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein in the case of the rule of at least the first class being violated and the number of packets violating the rule

of at least the first class not exceeding the pre-specified threshold, only providing the user discernable notification of the violation without providing the user discernable notification of the filtering.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein whether the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered or not is based on which of the plurality of priority levels is involved with respect to a corresponding rule violation.

31. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the firewall program is executable by said controller to cause filtering any of the packets that at least one of the rules, and wherein each of the plurality of user discernable indicators other than a particular one is respectively associated with the different ones of the plurality of classes, the particular one of the plurality of user discernable indicators being associated with an affirmative status that filtering is being contemporaneously performed, and wherein the particular one of the plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered, concurrently with the triggering of the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators, if the one or more of the rules is violated, the filtering is performed by the firewall program, and a number of the packets that violate the one or more rules exceeds a pre-specified threshold.

32. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein only the particular one of the plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered if the one or more of the rules is violated, the filtering is performed by the firewall program, and the number of the packets that violate the one or more rules does not exceed a pre-specified threshold.

33. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein only the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered if the one or more of the rules is violated, the filtering is performed by the firewall program, and the

number of the packets that violate the one or more rules does not exceed a pre-specified threshold.

34. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein whether the respective one of the plurality of user discernable indicators is triggered or not is based on which of the plurality of priority levels is involved with respect to a corresponding rule violation.

35. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, where each of the plurality of classes uses a different one of a plurality of thresholds with respect to how many violating ones of the packets must be detected before filtering is commenced, the plurality of thresholds being end-user settable.